

July 19, 2018

Historic Districts Commission  
1000 Rochester Hills Drive  
Rochester Hills, MI 48309

Dear Members of the Historic Districts Commission,

Last September, my husband and I sadly learned that our long-time neighbor, Don Ross, had passed away. He had lived on the property next door to us since we moved there in 1981. We asked his son, Mark, if he was going to sell the property adjoining ours, and Mark gave us the right of first refusal.

The property is lovely in every way. It is quiet, lush with woods and greenery, and it overlooks Stony Creek, something we deeply appreciate, having lived in the very same location for the past 37 years.

Initially, we thought we might remodel the home. However, we walked through it several times, each time seeing another feature that would make it very difficult for two aging people to overcome. The following are the reasons why we seek to demolish the home and rebuild:

- 1) We absolutely need a ranch-style home. There are three steps in two areas of the house, and they would be hazardous to us as walking and balance become more of a challenge.
- 2) The house is very labyrinthine, having been added on at different times since it was originally built. I can't see any part of the original house, as I believe it was entirely remodeled in the 40s or 50s.
- 3) Access to the utilities in the home is extremely hazardous to navigate. There is no basement. There is a cut-out square in the family room that leads to one of the utilities, and neither of us could get down that hole if something needed attention. Equally as difficult to navigate are the other utilities and the fuse box which are under the house with access only through a storm-cellar door. Elderly people simply could not navigate this safely.
- 4) We will need to have an attached garage. At this time, there is a detached garage (which we will keep), but elderly people cannot walk on uneven ground to get to the detached garage, especially in snowy and icy conditions.

5) We asked our builder to look at the exterior and interior of the house. He said without a doubt it would be much better to tear it down. It would not be worth spending the money to remodel because it would cost more than if we would rebuild. Plus, he said we would not be happy with the result. We trust our builder, as he did an extensive remodel on our own home 29 years ago, and he has done various projects for us throughout the years. We are all intimately familiar with the guidelines and rules of the HDC. Jay and I have painstakingly preserved the integrity of 1251 Washington Road since we move in. The home in question, 1271 Washington Road, doesn't even look historic.

6) Because the view of Stony Creek is so beautiful and makes that property so desirable, we'd like to take advantage of the setting and build our retirement home close to the edge of the ravine.

#### Future Plans for the Property

We will consult an architect to design a new one-floor home with attached garage which will be situated close to the edge of the ravine. The home will complement the architectural styles of 1251 and 1291, but will be one floor. We know that any design has to be approved by the HDC, and we plan to be in full compliance with its guidelines. We have a professional landscaper/gardener who is eager to design the outside plantings to enhance the beautiful setting. At some point, we would like to replace the gravel driveway with an asphalt driveway.

Our daughter and her husband plan to purchase 1251 over the next four years, so she will be close by to help us as we enter our golden years. This will be the third generation of Eastmans who have owned the home, as we purchased it from Jay's parents. Grace and Gus Eastman lived in it for 26 years.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter. We await your decision and hope you will see fit to grant us the demolition permit.

Sincerely,

*Linda Eastman*